

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT

BIRTH CUSTOMS

162 Havasupai families' averaging 4.7 persons, include roughly as
582 many children as our own. Girls marry soon after reaching maturity
and conception soon follows. Intercourse is not uncommon prior to this
● 836 time, but illegitimate births are said to be extremely rare. Yet in at
849 least one instance such a birth did not hinder subsequent marriage.

No preference is expressed for either sex, nor do they claim to control
842 the sex of the unborn child. However, by way of forecast, someone
[187] visiting the prospective mother will make string-figures which may
resemble either a boy or girl.

For a month before the birth the woman and her husband must re-
843 frain from meat, and the woman alone from very salty foods. These
746 taboos are relaxed a month after delivery, when hemorrhages cease.
Should she ignore them there will be complications. During this time
she must use a stick to scratch herself.

843 The child will be left-handed if the woman uses that hand much.
827 Should she hear a hawk (*adjúda*) cry, her child will have the hawk's
753 spirit, which will cause it to sicken.

When a woman thinks delivery near, she calls her relatives. In one
844 case observed, a young girl bearing her first child was closely watched,
accompanying her mother everywhere. The mother assists the delivery,
squatting behind the seated woman, clasping her hands above the ab-
domen and pressing downward. As this manipulation nears success, a
husband, father, or brother is called on to assist with pressure applied
to the front and sides. A hole has been dug in front of the woman to
receive the child, in which a blanket has been folded in nest-like form.
The umbilical cord is immediately squeezed and tied tightly an inch from
the body, and then cut. Pressure is applied to the abdomen to cause the
ejection of the placenta. This is buried deeply so that animals cannot
eat it, for should they do so, the woman would become barren. The
woman then stands erect to have a broad woven Hopi belt bound tightly
around her abdomen in order to force out the fluids. Should this be
neglected, they will flow into the top of the womb, causing death. Her
mother washes the woman's hair and body with soapweed lather. Her
husband has prepared a hole filled with hot stones outside of the house,
or within it if it is winter. A bed of damp sand covered with old clothes is
prepared on this; the woman lies face down, and is completely covered
with blankets. The purpose of this is to continue the flow by heating

wrinkle in their twenties. But look at me, I'm 44 and hardly have any wrinkles. Another thing, during the first four days of your monthly, don't smile very much, because it pulls your face in wrinkles and will leave lines there. We already told you not to eat meat or scratch with your nails at that time, and you shouldn't smoke for those four days. The same rules are for your husband and will keep him young too if he does everything right. We never told your people these things, so they just get old real soon. We're telling you because we want you to keep young like us. These things will make you look real young till in your fifties or sixties."

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The method of washing the face was not checked with older informants but was verified by several of middle age. It is interesting that this informant mentioned refraining from smiling, but neglected any mention of frowning. The Havasupai characteristically are a smiling people. A frown is seldom seen, and the face in repose customarily wears a placid expression.

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The Havasupai are relatively fastidious about personal cleanliness of their bodies and clothing from childhood until, perhaps, middle age. Families customarily bathe together daily in the creek during warm weather. Although middle-aged or old persons bathe less frequently, they go to a shallow place in the creek or bathe in a nearby irrigation ditch, modestly remaining partly clothed during the process. Creek bathing is believed to bring a rheumatic attack if the water is too cold. In winter, tub or sponge baths are taken, but less frequently. Personal cleanliness probably was emphasized less during winter plateau residence prior to permanent canyon residence and the ready availability of the water of Havasu Creek, which facilitates bathing.

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Sexual Attitudes and Premarital Experiences

The assertion that former generations refrained from premarital sexual relations appears to be a statement of the cultural ideal rather than fact. Informants usually prefaced a discussion of the subject with this generalization, but subsequent explanations and case descriptions revealed that, although premarital sexual license may have been more restricted than at present, it was nevertheless quite general.

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Teaching Modesty and Reticence

Although children of both sexes played together in early childhood, small girls were warned to seek privacy for excretory purposes and to avoid exposing their genitals in the presence of boys. Very young siblings of opposite sex now visit the toilet area together, and an older sister frequently has the obligation of attending a brother too young to take care of himself.

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Small girls traditionally were cautioned to beware of sexual advances by older boys. In 1952, the mother of a four-year-old girl remarked that

Learning About Sex

At least as far back as early reservation residence, and probably earlier during seasonal camping near the fields, young people of both sexes daily swam in Havasu Creek. Whether unchaperoned girls were permitted to swim together with boys prior to reservation days has not been learned, but members of each sex swam in separate groups under supervision of early school teachers. Because they were separated, both sexes swam nude.

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At the present time, knowledge of intercourse may be learned from observation in the home, although parents strive for secrecy. However, it is acknowledged that, due to sleeping arrangements, children probably observe copulation at an early age. Older boys discuss their experiences in the presence of younger boys, and small children of both sexes may witness dogs and other animals in coitus, or may chance upon a couple in a clandestine rendezvous. One informant states that 30 or 40 years ago, older girls and boys would openly have intercourse in the presence of small children while pretending to the little ones that they were "playing house."

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It may be significant in judging the former prevalence of some premarital experience that a groom made no trouble and asked no compensation if his bride were not a virgin. Spier (1928, 223) supports the view of present informants that neither a former marriage nor an illegitimate child made a girl less acceptable to a prospective groom, and this remains true today.

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It is reported, however, that in former times, a premarital sexual affair might lead to fighting between a girl's father and her lover, or to more serious consequences. "If a girl and boy went off together without thinking of marriage, and the girl's father thought they were sleeping together, he would shoot the boy," one informant said. While no case of an actual shooting was cited, such a threat may have been made. It is more likely, however, that an irate father, rather than shooting his daughter's lover, would shoot a horse or destroy property belonging to the youth in the traditional form of revenge permissible to the husband of an adulterous wife. The girl herself was severely chastized and sometimes beaten. However, such affairs apparently sometimes went undetected or, perhaps, were overlooked if a girl's parents had no objection to her lover, or if convention were not too openly flaunted.

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While public opinion was united in condemning premarital license, the weight of evidence indicates that, privately, people must have pretended ignorance that convention was being violated.

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It does not appear that the Havasupai have become socially or culturally disorganized or disintegrated to an extent likely to cause a breakdown in moral practices. Opler (1941, 141) suggests, in the words of an Apache informant, that young Chiricahua men could have intercourse with Comanche

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182 girls, while they could not do so with their own Chiricahua girls because the
834 two tribes had a basic difference in attitude toward the subject. The Apache
informant thought the question had nothing to do with degeneracy or contact
with white Americans, and that, as a matter of fact, the Apache tribe was
836 the more disorganized of the two.

It seems reasonable to assume, in consideration of evidence at hand,
836 that the Havasupai, once settled on the reservation, merely continued the
183 practice of an established cultural pattern of sexual license. Reservation
178 residence may have been a determining factor in producing a secondary
change in the existing pattern, however, by affording opportunities for more
frequent indulgence by each individual, and by permitting participation of a
wider segment of the population in the general pattern. A change from re-
stricted to somewhat preponderant sexual license is reflected in a similar
change in public attitude toward such relations. While, formerly, public
opinion rather vigorously denounced such behavior, present sentiment is
milder in tone and less concerted in denunciation. This relative mildness
of public censure apparently leaves members of the present younger genera-
tion undaunted in their preoccupation with sexual affairs.

834 Parents attempt to keep girls in ignorance of sexual relations until a
later age than they do boys. When a girl acquires information on the sub-
864 ject, her parents attempt to frighten her from experimentation by telling
her she will become pregnant.

It was not learned whether small boys and girls experiment with each
834 other, but in 1952 it was reliably reported by two informants, one of whom
684 was a witness, that a young man of 21 attempted to have intercourse with a
cooperative little girl of seven. In the investigator's presence, about 10
minutes after it occurred, this episode was reported by a witness to a group
of six or eight adults assembled to begin their afternoon gambling. In his
absence the young man was publicly berated by the group which continued to
gather. The youth in question, wayward, aggressive, and frequently in
trouble for theft and other offenses, seems to be feared by many of his fel-
low tribesmen who report that he carries a knife and has threatened to use
it on at least one occasion. When his father and uncle, who were among the
[626] gamblers, were told that they "ought to do something about him" both re-
plied that they had chastized him verbally but in vain, and they were afraid
to beat him because he would fight back.

834 Apparently, many girls are now initiated into sexual experience near
the time they reach puberty, their instructors probably being boys several
964 years their senior. It is said that if a boy and girl are seen merely talking
together on a trail, they are assumed to be having intimate relations in
secret.

571 Girls usually go about in pairs or in groups of three or four. Their
834 demeanor customarily is shy and reserved, particularly in the presence of

562 The assumption of marriage represented the greatest period of stress,
581 with the exception of widowhood, which a woman faced in the course of a
life span. In addition to social and psychological factors, the economic vulnerability of an individual under primitive conditions contributed to the crisis element in marriage. The transition was somewhat minimized by the traditional period of matri-local residence, but marriage nevertheless meant for every bride an open acceptance of sexual alliance which she previously had overtly pretended to reject, and it meant also a transfer of authority over her from her father, with whom she usually felt secure, to her husband, with whom she could expect to be in a position essentially vulnerable.

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It should be noted that girls at marriage would differ in age, temperament, emotional maturity, and family background, as well as in degree of sexual sophistication. This may account for variations in bridal attitudes ranging from modest agreement or token resistance to violent rejection and even repeated flight.

Changes in the Pattern

178 While ambivalence seems also to be manifest at present in the attitudes
562 of Havasupai women, no case of extreme reluctance such as that attributed
581 to brides of former generations has been reported for the recent period.
834 This may result, in part, from a closer association between the sexes in youth tending to lessen shyness and, in part, from possible feminine economic independence outside of the Havasupai Reservation.

● [836] Also, an apparent increase in premarital sexual experience, involving both a wider segment of the feminine population and greater frequency of occurrence for girls individually, has been accompanied by quasipublic acknowledgement and only mildly expressed disapproval of the normative behavior pattern. (This reported change in public sentiment, subtle in nature, can only be estimated as one of degree.)

A third factor, which may operate to minimize bridal reluctance at present, is that parents play a diminishing role in marital arrangements, thus permitting a girl greater opportunity to marry a man of her own choice, almost always one with whom she has had a premarital alliance of some duration.

With children of both sexes attending school together and living in close proximity, parents cannot entirely relegate their daughters to the background nor chaperone them closely. Girls are still taught to conduct themselves modestly, and their behavior is marked by reticence, although young people of both sexes laugh and joke together while swimming or gambling in mixed groups and on other occasions of a public or festive character, especially in the absence of their elders.

584 for an indefinite period. However, the factors of regularity and endurance do not necessarily portend interest in marriage.

Young people very early acquire the dominant group attitude of little or no moral compunction regarding covert sex expression, so that a girl may be relatively uninhibited in seeking gratification of sexual drives unless desirous to avoid pregnancy prompts some restraint. (The Havasupai point of view on the morality of sexual indulgence was indirectly revealed by one of the more Christianized adults who remarked of an older, unmarried Havasupai girl who reputedly refrains from sexual relations and is described as unique in this respect, "She says she's a Christian, so maybe she doesn't like sex.")

842 No information was obtained regarding the use of contraceptive methods or devices by unmarried couples, but the proportion of illegitimate births, 584 coupled with the beliefs and practices of married women presented elsewhere, suggest that contraception is not practiced generally, if indeed it is at all before marriage.

836 If a girl conceives during a casual affair, the alliance may become permanent, but only if the couple want to marry or at least have no objection to it. A boy is not forced into such a union. An accused youth is able to 584 refute a girl's claim merely by charging that her child is "everybody's baby." That girls seldom stand firm in such accusations may be further evidence of the casual and promiscuous character of early sexual activities.

584 In conclusion, primary courtship is transitory in character, centering strongly upon sexual experimentation with erotic stimuli, in essence motivated by a physiological drive for self-gratification rather than by any illusion of enduring affection for a particular sexual partner.

Secondary Courtship

Secondary courtship, by definition, begins when a couple recognizes a mutually exclusive attraction which may possibly lead to marriage. Age is not necessarily a factor, since many individuals engage in serious courtship rather early in adolescence, sometimes as early as puberty. As might be expected, fewer boys than girls court seriously at a very early age.

[83] Since courtship arises from and follows a pattern of sexual license which is covertly normative but overtly disapproved, courtship itself is a complex of attitudes and behavior patterns more or less clandestinely expressed. Courting couples publicly present to one another impassive countenances and aloof demeanor pretending to ignore each other. Havasupai etiquette, lacking in conventional salutatory and farewell forms, prescribes no obligatory verbal exchange when individuals join or leave a group, participate in a social situation such as card playing, meet unexpectedly while going about

the village, or meet (by design or otherwise) in their own or a neighbor's camp. Therefore, courting couples merely observing the usual forms may pass unnoticed, unless their avoidance or pretended lack of awareness of each other's presence is so elaborate or pointed as to become obvious.

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However, secretiveness itself is merely the overt pattern, for many courtships on both primary and secondary levels are known and closely followed in gossip. It appears that an individual attempts to keep his amours secret from all but a small circle of friends usually coinciding with members of his own age group. This circle becomes more exclusive in both numbers and margin of age difference as an individual approaches adulthood.

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With sexual initiation occurring sometimes or perhaps often in childhood play groups, children until puberty may candidly share knowledge of sexual experiences with others of the same age and with younger children. Within this age group some children may witness or openly participate in intercourse carried out in play. Upon reaching puberty, perhaps because physical development makes sexual play less an experimental act, a couple is likely to arrange a secret rendezvous. It appears, however, that a pair of boys may share a tryst with a pair of girls or even with one girl; certainly it is not unusual in cases of mock rape for two boys to "attack" one or two girls. During adolescence individuals of both sexes have confidants. It was not established whether boys' groups more freely discuss their sexual adventures than do girls; girls usually confide in one or more close friends. By comparing notes with a few friends, individuals can guess where most other interests lie in their particular age group, and from such sources information is relayed to virtually the entire social group. A teenage girl stated concisely, "We all know."

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While many marriages among younger generations grew out of courtship and some older couples apparently made love matches, Havasupai cultural tradition places no emphasis upon sentimental or romantic love as a basis for marriage. Nor does courtship itself appear to be conceived in such terms. Neither men nor women are thought to pine away, nor do individuals "carry a torch" for an unrequited or forbidden love. A bereaved spouse usually remarries rather soon. In the present older generation, one woman, who fled repeatedly from an arranged marriage because she wanted to marry her lover, eventually accepted her husband, to whom she later appeared devoted. It is said that she "forgot all about" the lover (who, incidentally, had made no attempt to prevent her marriage nor to rescue her from it and who soon married someone else). A few distantly related couples who persisted in marrying for love are strongly censured by the entire social group, while those who disregarded opposition arising from less serious causes to marry for love are more nearly viewed with apathy than championed by public sentiment. (In seeming contradiction to the foregoing, upon the suicide of a youth of 19 in 1954, public opinion strongly condemned the boy's parents for causing his death, reportedly because they had opposed a marriage he desired.

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582 in-law, they made no opposition. Instead, when they heard of the open
[626] course the affair was taking, the girl's mother came from Supai and advised
the boy. "If you are going with our daughter this way, don't leave her later
on. You ought to marry her, because she will be pregnant."

Following this, the young couple moved into a tent together but contin-
ued taking their meals where they worked, so that they were not actually
keeping house. At this time one informant told me, "We don't know whether
they are married. They didn't say anything, but they're living over there
like that, and it looks like they are married." Several other women, pres-
[626] ent during this interview, voluntarily echoed this opinion, everyone agreeing
primly that the couple ought to be married if they were not. However, a
short time later the couple separated.

When the girl gave birth to a child, her parents took her from the hospi-
[848] tal to live with them in Supai. Some months later, a reconciliation occur-
red and the couple was married legally. Two more children were born to
them. However, the marriage continued to be unstable, and now nearly six
[586] years after birth of the first child, the couple has been separated more than
a year and the wife appears firm in her resolve to obtain a court divorce.

Courtship, in this example, continued until the couple began to be seen
582 together publicly and were known to be spending nights together regularly.
587 The affair assumed the character of trial marriage when the couple made
no effort to conceal it in their public behavior toward one another. It was
clearly identifiable as a trial marriage following the visit of the girl's
mother when the couple began to occupy a tent together in the tribal village
[586] at Grand Canyon and the social group could no longer ignore the question of
the couple's marital status. It ended with separation of the couple before
the birth of their child. This separation was not considered a divorce.

It is evident that neither the principals nor anyone else could have pre-
582 dicted with much certainty the outcome of the trial stage in either of the
foregoing examples. Clearly then, the early stage of such an alliance is a
testing period. Not only are the bride and groom on trial with each other,
but the marriage itself is on trial for recognition by the families concerned
and by the social group. The latter aspect is especially significant if the
boy and girl are known to be related in any degree. Public disapproval usu-
ally, but not always, succeeds in dissolving such alliances.

The present practice of trial marriage probably has some precedent.
The brief duration of many first and second unions reported for the older
generation, and for generations now deceased, suggests a similar insta-
bility in the early period of marriage. If trial marriage comparable to that
[836] of present trial unions was practiced, it is a further indication that pre-
[183] marital sexual taboos were not as strictly observed by earlier generations
[585] as present informants like to believe. A man of about 60 (too young to have

867 Moreover, women in their role as mothers also have a large share in the
562 teaching of boys.

Fighting and Quarrelling

578 In the most common form of disagreement between women, a few uncomplimentary words are exchanged. At subsequent meetings the disputants ignore one another until one of them makes some friendly overture or the point of disagreement is settled. During the period of silent reproach or sulking, as the case may be, each of them avoids coming face to face with the other whenever possible.

883 Behavior of a group of Havasupai girls, aged about 16 to 25, employed at Grand Canyon and living in the Havasupai Indian Village there, was observed during a period of three weeks. The girls were allied in pairs or
[573] groups of three or four as close friends, but also spent some time together as a group. Their dominant interest appeared to be in the opposite sex, and they would rush home from work to wash out clothes, press a dress or blouse, pincurl or comb their own or each other's hair, and otherwise prepare for the coming evening. If they did not already have dates, they would go, two or three at a time, to the "B. A." (Bright Angel Lodge) where they would congregate in the lobby, outside on the terrace, or nearby, to wait for prospective boy friends to join the group or to invite one of the girls to leave it. Oftentimes, a number of younger brothers and sisters would be hanging about, and occasionally, one or two young married men or women would be present for a while. There was usually much joking, giggling, and good natured scuffling. The group changed composition rapidly and sometimes moved from one locale to another several times in the course of an evening. The strategy of each girl seemed to be to place herself in a position of availability.

In the same age bracket there happened to be one girl who was apart from the group described above. Two or three years earlier she had been much pursued by Havasupai men and was considered by them to be the best looking of her age group. After a period of what informants described as
[548] considerable sexual experience (or exploitation), she had taken up residence
[826] alone in a trailer house parked in the Indian Village, where her activities were observed and discussed. She was employed with the other girls, but, in addition, she was said to be a prostitute.

883 This girl was ostracized by girls of her own age as a group, although several of them had some casual association with her on an individual basis.
578 It appeared that such contact occurred when girls visited her trailer house
156 in company with their boy friends, or otherwise found themselves in her presence, men being the initiators of such meetings. Of course most of the girls were in daily contact with her at their common place of employment, and there a certain amount of friction reportedly occurred.